

## Rep. Nadler and Borough President Stringer Call for Improved Emergency Communication System

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NEW YORK —; Congressman Jerrold Nadler and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer today called on the City's Office of Emergency Management to improve and modernize their emergency communications system in order to better relay essential information to the public in the event of an emergency. In response to the recent tragedy at the Deutsche Bank Building, and the confusion that ensued for many residents of the area, local officials have said it is time for the City to better utilize modern technology to provide residents of lower Manhattan with vital information and answers to their valid questions when situations like the events of Saturday afternoon arise.

At a press conference in front of a residential building near the Deutsche Bank Building, Nadler and Stringer were joined by community leaders and concerned local residents who indicated a strong desire to have a clearer line of communication between coordinating agencies and the public. The residents of lower Manhattan continue to have legitimate concerns over air quality safety as a result of the toxic plume produced on September 11th and the toxins that lingered in the area for months after the terrorist attacks.

Specifically, Borough President Stringer said that the City's Office of Emergency Management should implement and promote a modernized public information system that would provide residents of lower Manhattan with up to date information via text message, email and automated phone calls. Information residents could receive would include details on potential evacuations, air quality test results, and important details about where they can call or visit to receive emergency assistance and answers to questions. Stringer pointed to California's Emergency Digital Information Service as a successful existing program which provides emergency bulletins to residents by easily allowing residents to sign up online.

"In light of the recent tragedy at the Deutsche Bank Building and the confusion that ensued for many residents of the area, this community has been reminded yet again of the unique and dangerous challenges they face," Borough President Stringer said. "In this day and age with the technology we have available, it is no longer acceptable for residents to be without answers. These residents were misled and lied to by the federal government after 9/11 and immediately establishing an efficient method of communication between responding agencies and the public is crucial to our public safety and paramount to restoring the public's trust in those who represent them."

"Since the demolition of the Deutsche Bank began, it has been clear that there is a need for a coherent community emergency action plan," Rep. Nadler said. "However, Saturday's fire showed that the currently existing plan is deeply flawed. This plan was poorly implemented and does not make use of technological advances. I, along with the community, have long supported an 'E-911' notification system that employs various technologies, including text messaging, E-updates and cell phone notification. It is critical to keep community members out of harms way and disseminate accurate and up to date information to them as soon as possible in an emergency. Moving forward, it is crucial that a proper plan be put into place and executed at the Deutsche Bank site and all demolition sites."

"This weekend's tragic fire, which took the lives of two of New York's bravest, has returned a sense of fear and uncertainty to Lower Manhattan residents, workers and visitors," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. "As I have said in the past, Lower Manhattan must have a system in place to notify our citizens if emergency situations occur. I urge the Office of Emergency Management to implement a technologically advanced communications system that will provide immediate updates on measures taken to protect the health and safety of our citizens."

Julie Menin, Chairperson of Community Board 1 added, "For the past several years Community Board 1 has called on OEM repeatedly to have in place a community notification plan for lower Manhattan and specifically 130 Liberty Street. Our calls have apparently fallen on deaf ears and it is time for action."

New York State Senator Martin Connor (D - Manhattan & Brooklyn) said, "It is time for government agencies to think outside of the box and to begin to use 21st century technology along with the existing press and media outlets to better communicate with residents and businesses when an emergency or a dangerous situation occurs in our city. In this day and age the technology exists to quickly communicate information to people via e-mail, cell phone, PDA, etc. Our community should not have to depend upon rumors or gossip when life or death issues are involved."

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